

Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI)

"I've gotten quite a bit of benefit from using the tank in terms of animal performance," said Dale Veseth, a Phillips County rancher. "GLCI is a good way to demonstrate applied research for producers."

photo: Gene Surber



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Dale Veseth, rancher near Malta, uses a solar pump to draw water from a reservoir into a nearby water tank. Water in the tank has fewer total suspended solids (TSS) than water found in the reservoir. Research indicates yearling weights will increase with improved water quality availability.

The Montana Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) is a voluntary effort to enhance Montana's 40 million acres of privately owned grazing lands by increasing technical assistance at the grassroots level.

This effort is led by a steering committee composed of individuals and organizations with a vested interest in grazing lands. Members include John Hollenback, Robert Lee, Robert Hanson, Aggie Helle, Pete Jackson, Ellis Williams, Lonnie Reukauf, John Anderson, and Clint Peck.

NRCS provides funds through GLCI to support demonstration projects and educational programs throughout the state, in addition to providing range management technical assistance to ranchers in every county in Montana. Montana State University Extension and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Conservation and Resource Development Division also provide technical and educational assistance to GLCI projects.

Funded since 1996, GLCI funds have supported 28 projects in 40 counties in Montana. Projects have focused on enhancing economic, social, and environmental stability of private grazing lands.

photo: USDA



NRCS allocated \$15,000 for six new projects in 1999:

- In Teton County, grazing land managers initiated a study on how to control shrubby cinquefoil to improve range condition and productivity.
- Six conservation districts in southwest Montana will develop a publication which illustrates successful winter grazing and feeding operations across the state.
- In Fergus County, the Grass Range Rancher Group established and will evaluate grass and legume trial plots for their ability to extend the grazing season.
- In Meagher County, cattle producers are determining whether the forage resource is meeting the nutritional needs of the animal by collecting fecal samples and analyzing them with the nutritional balance analyzer (NUTBAL) program. The results of the analysis for crude protein and energy are combined with information about the cattle herd and its environment.
- The Custer County Conservation District and the Stillwater Range Association are buying two portable livestock scales so ranchers can obtain accurate cattle weights. The actual weight data will complement the nutritional balance analyzer and fecal sampling for livestock nutrition (NUTBAL) program; ranchers can better determine the association between livestock weights, forage nutritional needs, and grazing management.



"With a little bit of GLCI money, we can test some ideas and theories, which helps ranchers and others and helps the rangeland itself," said John Hollenback, chairperson for the Montana Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative steering committee.

Distribution of GLCI Projects in Montana

